

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 05224 012008Z

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ACTION ARA-10

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R 011900Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3261

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 5224

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JM

SUBJECT: OPPOSITION LEADER CHARGES PNP WITH "INCHING TOWARD
CUBAN COMMUNISM"

1. SUMMARY: IN NATIONAL RADIO ADDRESS JLP LEADER SEAGA HAS ACCUSED PNP LEADER MANLEY OF ORCHESTRATING "A SUBTLE CREEP INTO CUBAN COMMUNISM" AND HAS WARNED JAMAICA AGAINST "BEING DUPED INTO CASTRO'S DRAGNET". PLAYING ON THE EMOTIONALLY CHARGED CUBAN-JAMAICA ISSUE, SEAGA SOUGHT TO ALARM LISTENERS OVER FUTURE OF CUBA'S ROLE IN JAMAICA SHOULD PNP BE RE-ELECTED. RADIO ADDRESS DEMONSTRATES ESSENTIALLY NEGATIVE-ISSUE ORIENTATION OF JLP CAMPAIGN TO DATE. END SUMMARY.

2. SEAGA SPOKE TO NATIONAL RADIO AUDIENCE NOVEMBER 26 PARTIALLY IN RESPONSE TO MANLEY'S NOVEMBER 19 BROADCAST IN WHICH PNP LEADER ACCUSED SEAGA OF DISTORTIONS AND LIES ON EXTENT OF JAMAICA'S CUBA ORIENTATION. SEAGA DECRIED FACT THAT MANLEY HAD USED FREE PUBLIC TIME FOR HIS POLITICAL BROADCAST AND NOTED THAT IN COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, THIS WAS NORMAL PRACTICE
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PAGE 02 KINGST 05224 012008Z

BECAUSE "THERE THE PARTY AND GOVERNMENT ARE HELD

TO BE THE SAME."

3. SEAGA ACKNOWLEDGED THAT JLP HAD BEEN IN POWER WHEN DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WERE ESTABLISHED WITH CUBA BUT HE SAID PNP HAS GONE FAR BEYOND THIS TO ESTABLISH PARTY-TO-PARTY LINKS WITH CUBAN COMMUNISTS. EAGA ALLUDED TO MANLEY'S STATEMENT THAT HE AND CASTRO WOULD WALK HAND-IN-HAND TO THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN. HE ALSO POINTED OUT "SEVERAL INTERCHANGES" OF CUBAN COMMUNIST OFFICIALS AND PNP PARTY OFFICIALS OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS. HE CHARGED THAT THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MANLEY'S POLICIES AND THOSE OF CASTRO WERE BUT "AN ARMS LENGTH."

4. SEAGA ALSO NOTED THAT CUBAN COMMUNISTS HAD SENT DELEGATES TO PNP'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE SINCE 1974 INCLUDING ONE DELEGATE WHO WAS HEAD OF THE CUBAN SPY ORGANIZATION, THE DGI. HE MADE AN EFFORT TO LINK PNP TO THE LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY, THE WORKERS' LIBERATION LEAGUE, HEADED BY TREVOR MUNROE. HE POINTED TO THE POSSIBILITY THE PNP MIGHT ESTABLISH ITS OWN DEFENSE ORGANIZATION AND MENTIONED THAT SOME CUBANS IN JAMAICA CARRIED ARMS.

5. SEAGA ALSO TOOK MANLEY TO TASK FOR HAVING PRAISED COMMUNIST CUBA WITHOUT CONDEMNING THE DENIALS OF FREE SPEECH AND FAIR TRIALS AND THE "30,000 POLITICAL PRISONERS EXISTING IN CUBA WITHOUT HOPE."

6. COMMENT: SEAGA'S BELATED REBUTTAL TO MANLEY'S NOVEMBER 19 SPEECH IS DESCRIPTIVE OF THE NEGATIVE CAMPAIGN STYLE HE HAS ADOPTED TO DATE. IN THE ABSENCE OF A CAMPAIGN PLATFORM OR MANIFESTO OF HIS OWN, SEAGA HAS SOUGHT TO CAPITALIZE ON THE EXISTING FEARS OF A COMMUNIST OR CUBA ORIENTED PNP. HE WILL RECEIVE A SYMPATHETIC AUDIENCE IN SOME QUARTERS, PARTICULARLY AMONG CHURCH GROUPS ALREADY QUITE FRETFUL OVER MANLEY'S CUBA ORIENTATION. NET
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PAGE 03 KINGST 05224 012008Z

BENEFIT OF THIS LINE TO SEAGA IS REAL BUT LIMITED. IT DOES HOWEVER INCREASE LOCAL POLARIZATION AND SERVE TO FURTHER INFLAME ALREADY OVERHEATED POLITICAL PASSIONS. PERHAPS THIS APPROACH WILL CHANGE WITH PUBLICATION NEXT WEEK OF JLP ELECTION MANIFESTO.
GERARD

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